

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A parts management system comprising:

a communication network;

a first computer for a user, said first computer having management data on component parts for an apparatus, delivered to the user; and

a second computer for a manufacturer, said second computer being connected to said first computer via said communication network, and having a database provided therein, the database including a list having fields for a plurality of kinds of management data for the component parts for the apparatus in association with each of ID (identification) numbers of the component parts,

said second computer comprising:

acquisition means for acquiring the management data on the component parts for the apparatus from said first computer via said communication network, and

comparison means for comparing the acquired management data with the management data within the database,

wherein said first computer has provided therein a second database of the management data on the component parts for the apparatus corresponding to the management data on the database, and said acquisition means acquires the management data from the second database via said communication network,

wherein said comparison means comprises:

first determination means for determining whether or not an ID number of a part acquired from the second database exists in the database,

second determination means for determining whether or not the ID number of the part acquired from the second database is identical to an ID number that has been inputted to the second database, and

third determination means for determining whether or not the ID number of the part acquired from the second database is identical to an ID number already discarded in the database, and

wherein when the ID number of the part acquired from the second database exists in the database, the ID number is identical to an ID number that has been inputted to the second database, and the ID number is identical to an ID number already discarded in the database, the part is determined to be a non-conforming part.

Claim 2 (Original): A parts management system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the database in said second computer includes at least a part delivery history associated with the parts delivered to the user, as the management data.

Claim 3 (Canceled).

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): A parts management system as claimed in claim [[3]] 1, wherein the second database includes a list having fields for a plurality of kinds of management data for the parts in association with each of the ID numbers of the parts.

Claim 5 (Original): A parts management system as claimed in claim 4, wherein the management data in the second database includes at least one of data items indicative of a

part number, a part name, and a mounting date which are associated with each of the parts, and whether or not the part has been discarded.

Claim 6 (Original): A parts management system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the management data in the database includes at least one of data items indicative of a part name, a manufacturing date, a delivery date, a delivery destination, a service life, and an allowable number of times of use which are associated with each of the parts.

Claim 7 (Original): A parts management system as claimed in claim 1, wherein each of said second computer and said first computer includes input means for inputting the management data on the parts.

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): A parts management system as claimed in claim [[3]]
1, wherein said comparison means comprises first determination means for determining whether or not an ID number of a part acquired from the second database exists in the database, and

wherein when the ID number of the part acquired from the second database does not exist in the database, said first determination means determines that the part is a non-conforming part.

Claim 9 (Canceled).

Claim 10 (Currently Amended): A parts management system as claimed in claim [[9]] 1, wherein said comparison means further comprises fourth determination means for determining whether or not a cumulative service time period of the part acquired from the second database is equal to or longer than a service life of the part, and

wherein when the ID number of the part acquired from the second database exists in the database, the ID number is identical to any ID number that has been inputted to the second database, the ID number is not identical to any ID number already discarded in the database, and the cumulative service time period of the part acquired from the second database is equal to or longer than the service life of the part, the part is determined to be a non-conforming part.

Claim 11 (Original): A parts management system as claimed in claim 10, wherein said first computer comprises:

second acquisition means connected via said communication network to an apparatus having an operation system in which the component parts for the apparatus are used, for acquiring a number of times of operation of the operation system of the apparatus using the parts, and

wherein said comparison means comprises:

fifth determination means for determining whether or not the number of times of operation is equal to or larger than an allowable number of times of use of a part existing in the database, and

wherein when the ID number of the part acquired from the second database exists in the database, when the ID number is identical to any ID number that has

been inputted to the second database, the ID number is not identical to any ID number already discarded in the database, the cumulative service time period of the part acquired from the second database is not equal to or longer than the service life of the part, and, further the number of times of operation of the part acquired from the second database is equal to or larger than the allowable number of times of use of the part, the part is determined to be a non-conforming part.

Claim 12 (Currently Amended): A parts management system ~~as claimed in claim 1,~~
comprising:

a communication network;

a first computer for a user, said first computer having management data on component parts for an apparatus, delivered to the user; and

a second computer for a manufacturer, said second computer being connected to said first computer via said communication network, and having a database provided therein, the database including a list having fields for a plurality of kinds of management data for the component parts for the apparatus in association with each of ID (identification) numbers of the component parts,

said second computer comprising:

acquisition means for acquiring the management data on the component parts for the apparatus from said first computer via said communication network, and

comparison means for comparing the acquired management data with the management data within the database,

wherein said first computer acquires the management data on the component parts for the apparatus from an IC (integrated circuit) ~~or a bar code~~ attached to the part, the IC includes a high-frequency section for non-contact transmission/reception of data, and a frequency band different from a frequency band used for RF application in plasma processing is selected as the transmitting frequency band for the IC.

Claim 13 (Original): A parts management system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the apparatus comprises a substrate processing apparatus.

Claim 14 (Original): A parts management system as claimed in claim 13, wherein the substrate processing apparatus is selected from the group consisting of a plasma processing apparatus, a thermal processing apparatus, a film deposition apparatus, a plasma etching apparatus, an in-line semiconductor processing apparatus, and a multi-chamber semiconductor processing apparatus.

Claim 15 (Original): A parts management system as claimed in claim 11, further comprising a container device connected to said second computer via said communication network, and containing the component parts for the apparatus already delivered to the user, and

wherein said container device comprises:

detection means for detecting that any of the component parts for the apparatus has been taken out from the container device, and

transmission means operable when said detection means detects that any of the component parts has been taken out, to transmit an ID number of the taken out part to said second computer.

Claim 16 (Currently Amended): A parts management method of performing parts management using a second computer for a manufacturer, the second computer being connected to a first computer for a user, which has management data on component parts for an apparatus delivered to the user, via a communication network, and having a database provided therein, the database including a list having fields for a plurality of kinds of management data for the component parts for the apparatus in association with each of ID (identification) numbers of the component parts, the parts management method comprising:

- an acquisition step of acquiring the management data on the component parts for the apparatus from the first computer via the communication network; and
- a comparison step of comparing the acquired management data with the management data within the database,

wherein the first computer has provided therein a second database of the management data on the component parts for the apparatus corresponding to the management data on the database, and said acquisition step comprises acquiring the management data from the second database via the communication network,

wherein said comparison step comprises:

- a first determination step of determining whether or not an ID number of the part acquired from the second database exists in the database,

a second determination step of determining whether or not the ID number of a part acquired from the second database is identical to an ID number that has been inputted in the second database, and

a third determination step of determining whether or not the ID number of the part acquired from the second database is identical to an ID number already discarded in the database, and

wherein the parts management method further comprises a determination step of determining that the part is determined to be a non-conforming part, when it is determined in said first determination step that the ID number of the part acquired from the second database exists in the database, in said second determination step that the ID number is identical to an ID number that has been inputted to the second database, and in said third determination step that the ID number is identical to an ID number already discarded in the database.

Claim 17 (Original): A parts management method as claimed in claim 16, wherein the database in the second computer includes at least a part delivery history associated with the parts delivered to the user, as the management data.

Claim 18 (Canceled).

Claim 19 (Currently Amended): A parts management method as claimed in claim [[18]] 16, wherein the second database includes a list having fields for a plurality of kinds of management data for the parts in association with each of the ID numbers of the parts.

Claim 20 (Original): A parts management method as claimed in claim 19, wherein the management data in the second database includes at least one of data items indicative of a part number, a part name, and a mounting date which are associated with each of the parts, and whether or not the part has been discarded.

Claim 21 (Original): A parts management method as claimed in claim 16, wherein the management data in the database includes at least one of data items indicative of a part name, a manufacturing date, a delivery date, a delivery destination, a service life, and an allowable number of times of use which are associated with each of the parts.

Claim 22 (Original): A parts management method as claimed in claim 16, comprising an input step of inputting the management data on the parts by each of the second computer and the first computer.

Claim 23 (Currently Amended): A parts management method as claimed in claim [[18]] 16, wherein said comparison step comprises a first determination step of determining whether or not an ID number of a part acquired from the second database exists in the database, and

wherein when it is determined in said first determination step that the ID number of the part acquired from the second database does not exist in the database, the part is determined to be a non-conforming part.

Claim 24 (Canceled).

Claim 25 (Currently Amended): A parts management method as claimed in claim [[24]] 16, wherein said comparison step further comprises a fourth determination step of determining whether or not a cumulative service time period of the part acquired from the second database is equal to or longer than a service life of the part, and

wherein the parts management method comprises a determination step of determining that the part is a non-conforming part, when it is determined in said first determination step that the ID number of the part acquired from the second database exists in the database, in said second determination step that the ID number is not identical to any ID number inputted to the second database in the past, in said third determination step that the ID number is not identical to any ID number already discarded in the database, and in said fourth determination step that the cumulative service time period of the part acquired from the second database is equal to or longer than the service life of the part.

Claim 26 (Original): A parts management method as claimed in claim 25, wherein the first computer is connected to the apparatus via the communication network, and wherein said comparison step further comprises

a fifth determination step of determining whether or not a number of times of operation of an operation system of the apparatus is equal to or larger than an allowable number of times of use of a part existing in the database, and wherein the parts management method further comprises:

a second acquisition step of acquiring the number of times of operation of the operation system of the apparatus, and

a determination step of determining that the part is a non-conforming part, when it is determined in said first determination step that the ID number of the part acquired from the second database exists in the database, in said second determination step that the ID number is not identical to any ID number that has been inputted to the second database, in said third determination step that the ID number is not identical to any ID number already discarded in the database, in said fourth determination step that the cumulative service time period of the part acquired from the second database is not equal to or longer than the service life of the part, and, further, in said fifth determination step that the number of times of operation of the part acquired from the second database in said second acquisition step is equal to or larger than the allowable number of times of use of the part.

Claim 27 (Currently Amended): A parts management method ~~as claimed in claim 16,~~
of performing parts management using a second computer for a manufacturer, the second computer being connected to a first computer for a user, which has management data on component parts for an apparatus delivered to the user, via a communication network, and having a database provided therein, the database including a list having fields for a plurality of kinds of management data for the component parts for the apparatus in association with each of ID (identification) numbers of the component parts, the parts management method comprising:

an acquisition step of acquiring the management data on the component parts for the apparatus from the first computer via the communication network; and

a comparison step of comparing the acquired management data with the management data within the database,

wherein the first computer acquires the management data on the component parts for the apparatus from an IC (integrated circuit) or a bar code attached to each of the parts, the integrated circuit includes a high-frequency section for non-contact transmission/reception of data, and a frequency band different from a frequency band used for RF application in plasma processing is selected as the transmitting frequency band for the IC.

Claim 28 (Original): A parts management method as claimed in claim 16, wherein the apparatus comprises a substrate processing apparatus.

Claim 29 (Original): A parts management method as claimed in claim 28, wherein the substrate processing apparatus is selected from the group consisting of a plasma processing apparatus, a thermal processing apparatus, a film deposition apparatus, a plasma etching apparatus, an in-line semiconductor processing apparatus, and a multi-chamber semiconductor processing apparatus.

Claim 30 (Original): A parts management method as claimed in claim 26, further comprising a containing step of containing the component parts for the apparatus already delivered to the user, in a container device connected to the second computer via the communication network, and

wherein said containing step comprises:

a detection step of detecting that any of the component parts for the apparatus has been taken out from the container device, and

a transmission step of transmitting an ID number of a part of the component parts that has been taken out, to the second computer, when in said detection step, it is detected that the part of the component parts has been taken out.

Claim 31 (Currently Amended): A parts management program for causing a second computer for a manufacturer to perform a parts management method, the second computer being connected to a first computer for a user, which has management data on component parts for an apparatus, delivered to the user, via a communication network, and having a database provided therein, the database including a list having fields for a plurality of kinds of management data for the component parts for the apparatus in association with each of ID (identification) numbers of the component parts for the apparatus, the parts management program comprising:

an acquisition module for acquiring the management data on the component parts for the apparatus from the first computer via the communication network; and

a comparison module for comparing the acquired management data with the management data within the database,

wherein the first computer has provided therein a second database of the management data on the component parts for the apparatus corresponding to the management data on the database, and said acquisition step comprises acquiring the management data from the second database via the communication network,

wherein said comparison module comprises:

a first determination module for determining whether or not an ID number of the part acquired from the second database exists in the database,

a second determination module for determining whether or not the ID number of a part acquired from the second database is identical to an ID number that has been inputted in the second database, and

a third determination module for determining whether or not the ID number of the part acquired from the second database is identical to an ID number already discarded in the database, and

wherein the parts management program further comprises a determination module for determining that the part is determined to be a non-conforming part, when it is determined by said first determination module that the ID number of the part acquired from the second database exists in the database, by said second determination module that the ID number is identical to an ID number that has been inputted to the second database, and by said third determination module that the ID number is identical to an ID number already discarded in the database.

Claim 32 (Original): A computer-readable storage medium storing a parts management program as claimed in claim 31.

Claim 33 (New): A parts management program for causing a second computer for a manufacturer to perform a parts management method, the second computer being connected to a first computer for a user, which has management data on component parts for an apparatus, delivered to the user, via a communication network, and having a database

provided therein, the database including a list having fields for a plurality of kinds of management data for the component parts for the apparatus in association with each of ID (identification) numbers of the component parts for the apparatus, the parts management program comprising:

an acquisition module for acquiring the management data on the component parts for the apparatus from the first computer via the communication network; and

a comparison module for comparing the acquired management data with the management data within the database,

wherein the first computer acquires the management data on the component parts for the apparatus from an IC (integrated circuit) attached to the part, the IC includes a high-frequency section for non-contact transmission/reception of data, and a frequency band different from a frequency band used for RF application in plasma processing is selected as the transmitting frequency band for the IC.

Claim 34 (New): A computer-readable storage medium storing a parts management program as claimed in claim 33.